

# **Union Township Environmental Commission**

## **Minutes of the November 11, 2008 Regular Meeting**

The November 11, 2008 Regular Meeting of the Union Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM.

The notice of meeting as published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier-News satisfied the requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act, and was also posted in the Municipal Building, on the Union Township website and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

### **I. Roll Call:**

Present: Bill Harclerode, Stephen Hurford, Michele McBride, Chuck Neary, Sandy Stiger, John Wingler, Kathleen Corcoran

Public Members Present: Mayor Mazza, John Corcoran, Kathy Hale

### **II. Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Hurford stated that he did not read last month's minutes because he did not receive them through email, and he also does not receive agendas. Mr. Harclerode stated that they are also posted on the Twp. website, and that they are emailed by him. Mr. Hurford clarified his email address with the group to ensure that he receives all future Environmental Commission emails. Ms. McBride moved that the minutes be approved as written. Mr. Wingler seconded. All approved.

### **III. Kathy Hale of the New Jersey Water Supply Authority Presentation re: River Friendly Resident Program:**

Mr. Harclerode explained that this presentation is also considered a stormwater education seminar as required by the State of NJ. Ms. Hale explained that the NJWSA is an in but not of State Agency, which manages various water supply systems that supply about 1.5 million NJ residents. She explained that there are a lot of issues within the Raritan River Basin that are mainly caused by development. A lot of this can be minimized by implementing "river friendly" practices. The NJWSA has developed four "river friendly" programs including golf course, business, farms, parks and residents programs. Each program works with land owners to improve land management practices to improve water resources by reducing non point source pollution, reducing water consumption and supporting native habitat and wildlife. Ms. Hale stated that the NJWSA would like to include larger county and municipal parks, such as Hoffman Park, in its program. Currently there are 12 certified farms in the program and 25 farms involved in the program. Ms. Hale handed out a certification questionnaire that would be required to be completed and passed in order to qualify to be certified by the NJWSA as a "river friendly" resident. She explained why each questionnaire question/answer is significant to protecting water quality. Water conservation devices include shower head modifications, toilet tank bladders and faucet aerators. Fertilizer utilization was also discussed, as the runoff of excess fertilizer puts excessive nutrients into waterways and causes algae blooms. Phosphorus is a key component in fertilizers that most northern NJ lawns do not need. Soil pH is a key factor in what a lawns needs. Rutgers Cooperative Extension has a soil testing program that residents can utilize for a small fee. Leaving grass clippings on the lawn is good, as it is a natural mulch and provides nutrients back into the soil. It is also good to plant native species as they will require less water than other species. Bird houses are a good way to support a healthy ecosystem, including insects. Cleaning up pet waste and maintaining septic systems are also important components of protecting water quality. Stream clean-ups and public education are also important to the "river friendly" program. Phosphorus is the nutrient in fertilizers that is causing algae blooms in our area.

There was some discussion about the status of the Spruce Run Reservoir. Ms. McBride asked about the low water level. Ms. Hale stated that the NJWSA is keeping the level low as they are doing repairs to the outlet structures. Mr. Wingler asked about floating "jelly like pods" in the water that have been there for several weeks/months, which were small a few years ago but were huge recently. Ms. Hale stated that they are "bryozoa", which is a collection of small organisms. It is not abnormal and is not harmful. They are probably currently more prevalent due to lower water levels.

Ms. Hale asked all attendants to fill out the "river friendly" questionnaire certification and all that get a 75% certification will receive a free cloth shopping bag. This applies to anybody that fills out the questionnaire. The NJWSA will mail them a cloth shopping bag along with other guidance. The NJWSA encourages all to publicize the program.

#### **IV. Old Business**

1. Well Testing Day: Mr. Wingler stated that Monday, January 12, 2009, will be well water sample receipt date. Residents will have December through January 9, 2008 to pick up kits. The clerk will collect the checks. Info will also be posted on the website. UTEC volunteers will be at the Municipal Bldg. on Jan. 12 to collect samples from about 7-10 am. Mrs. Stiger will assist with sample kit collection. Some samples should be checked for air pockets, and all should be checked to be tagged properly, etc. If somebody has questions or misses this timeframe, they can call the Watershed Association for additional instruction. Samples can be brought directly to them.

#### **V. Correspondence:**

1. Mr. Harclerode reported that Lebanon Twp. passed an unmuffled engine braking resolution, which makes ten total passed, as requested in letters sent out by the Noise Reduction Subcommittee.
2. There is a Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> Highlands Conformance and Municipal and Environmental Resource Inventory meeting in Morris County at 7:00 pm.
3. Mr. Harclerode attended the "What's New in Septic System Technologies" on Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 and 6:00 pm sponsored by the County Dept. of Health in Flemington, which discussed PEAT systems, biofilters and other technologies, and general maintenance topics.
4. The ANJEC report has a lot of information, including Highlands issues, Environmental Resource Inventories, and Easement Mapping. There are grants available, as the Town of Clinton and East Amwell have received them.

#### **VI. Committee Reports:**

##### **Open Space Committee:**

1. Mrs. Stiger has been emailing Kerry Miller at ANJEC and she would be willing to meet, but doesn't suggest doing anything without getting approval from the Township to put up the matching portion of the grant. Maybe there is a possibility of teaming with other municipalities, and Mr. Harclerode is also looking into it. It was suggested that we continue researching the issues.

##### **Property Stewardship:**

1. Ms. McBride forwarded the latest RFP to the group for review. There are some outstanding legal issues, such as getting a Certificate of Occupancy. There are also some Township issues such as snow plowing. Before she goes forward, she wanted the UTEC consensus that the Stewardship Subcommittee should move forward. All commended Ms. McBride and the subcommittee for their efforts. Mr. Hurford made a motion for the subcommittee to present the RFP to the Twp. Council. Mrs. Corcoran seconded. All approved.
2. Ms. McBride discussed the proposed Douglas Conservation Preservation Easement and it is proposed that one up to 5,000 sq. ft. single family home can be put on the property, retaining the square footage of the farm buildings. Mr. Mazza suggested that Atty. Anderson of the Planning Bd. be consulted on the land use limitations. Mrs. Corcoran made a motion for the group to go to Mr. Anderson for his input. All agreed.

##### **Transportation:**

1. The Road Noise Group (formerly a subcommittee of UTEC but now involving several other municipalities) has been very successful in obtaining support in this endeavor. Amy Switlyk of Clinton Township has also been working very hard on behalf of the Group. There are three NJ Bills in process regarding unmuffled engine braking. Assemblywoman Karrow and Matt Holt have been interested and effective, and deserve recognition. The League of Municipalities has a proposed resolution that may be approved next week. Mayor Mazza

stated that he is amazed at the success of Mr. Harclerode and the group at all of the noise reduction measures that have been achieved.

**Education:**

1. Ms. McBride handed out a draft newsletter. Neil Davis has put in at least 35 hours on this. Included articles are the new recycling program, Chairman's letter, Hoffman Park, Agricultural Advisory Committee, Road Department Maintenance, stormwater control, Sidney Brook Assessment Update, South Branch Watershed Cleanup Update, Twp. Directory, Medication Disposal, Well Testing, and endangered species. Ms. McBride is still seeking advertisers. This newsletter will be smaller than the previous one. The environmental success of Ken Ravenburg's Farm will be mentioned. Mr. Wingler made a motion to submit the newsletter to the Twp. Council for approval. Mr. Hurford seconded. All approved.

**VII. Public Input:**

1. Mayor Mazza stated that he is very pleased with the work of the group and is amazed at the accomplishments of Mr. Harclerode at taking over the UTEC and all that has been accomplished by the group and subcommittees.

**VIII. Planning Board Report:**

1. Mrs. Corcoran stated that the Pilot meeting on Nov. 5, the application was approved with various contingencies including compliance with all the professionals' reports, engine idling requirements, well record reporting and related environmental issues, in addition to security requirements. Full cut-off lighting will be required throughout the site. The building will be colonial style, and the wastewater treatment system is high level treatment. An aquifer test is required to assess if the proposed NJDEP requested draw of water can be accommodated.
2. Mr. Harclerode mentioned that the Wetlands Transition Area Waiver has expired for the Perryville Wines and Spirits site.
3. The Fallone Age Restricted Development is also proposing to phase its development.

**IX. Wastewater Management Planning:**

1. Mrs. Corcoran stated that she attended the County Roundtable Meeting on Wastewater Management Planning and there were a lot of people there. John Reymann was also there and collected the UT maps. She stated that Mayor Mazza asked her to be one of the three recommended people on the advisory committee with the County. Ms. McBride inquired about the Highlands Opt-In Process and Mayor Mazza stated that we are working to apply for the 1-year Highlands Extension. Mayor Mazza recently signed the papers and Atty. Jost will be forwarding to the state and COAH, so it should be approved shortly.

**X. Adjournment:**

1. The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Mrs. Corcoran, seconded by Mr. Hurford, and approved by a 7-0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Corcoran, Secretary